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Expanding the



Better food and more of it lights up the faces of this family as they examine purchases they made with food stamp coupons. N-48179

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Consumer and Marketing Service

Picture Story No. 177
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The Food Stamp Program helps low-income residents in both urban and rural America to "help themselves" to better diets and better health. N-55265

HOW IT HELPS

A mother in Tennessee said she didn't know her 4-year-old child had been suffering from malnutrition until after she joined the Food Stamp Program. Then, the child's weight went from 20 to 35 pounds during the first four months of eating more nourishing food bought with Federal food coupons.

Another food stamp recipient said his children had enough to eat for the first winter in their lives. "The children are healthier and haven't had as many colds, because we have been able to buy fresh fruits for them," he said.

A group of school principals reported that pupils were better dressed, appeared better fed, and missed fewer school days after their families were able to take part in the food stamp program.

During a period of great economic well-being, with farmers producing enough food for everyone in this country to eat well, millions of Americans have incomes too small to meet minimum food needs.

The Food Stamp Program, administered nationally by the Consumer and Marketing Service (C&MS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, helps get more food to low income families in the United States. The program is an effective way of safeguarding the health of the Nation's needy families through better nutrition, while increasing the flow of food from its farms through normal market channels. It also helps boost the economy of areas where it's in operation.

The USDA tested the program in 43 areas of the United States, starting in May 1961. The Food Stamp Act of 1964 allows for its gradual expansion over a period of years into areas of the country needing it and which choose to participate.

The first expansion under the Act provides for food stamp programs in a limited number of areas in 41 States and the District of Columbia by the summer of 1965. The program is a voluntary one, and the initial expansion was based upon requests from the States and the amount of funds made available by the Congress.



Who Is Eligible

Families and individuals determined by State welfare agencies to be in economic need of food assistance may elect to participate in the Food Stamp Program. Generally, those receiving some type of public or general assistance under a State's welfare program are eligible, as long as they are living in a household and prepare food for home consumption. Other families may also be eligible if their income does not exceed stated amounts. The income limits are worked out by USDA with the State, and must be in line with the standards used by the State in its own welfare programs.

How It Operates

Eligible families exchange the amount of money they could normally be expected to spend on food for Federal food stamp coupons worth more. How much more depends upon the size and income of the family. The U.S. Department of Agriculture pays the difference between the amount the family pays and the value of the coupons it receives.

Families use the coupons just like money to buy food (except items identified as imported) in retail stores at the regular price. USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service authorizes retailers to accept the coupons, and merchants agree to abide by rules for accepting and redeeming them. Retailers redeem the coupons through banks or authorized food wholesalers. Local banks, in turn, send the cancelled coupons to Federal Reserve Banks.



These are reproductions of the food stamp coupons, issued in denominations of 50 cents and two dollars. No change in cash may be given for coupons. If an amount less than 50 cents is required, the shopper may pay it in cash or accept a credit slip from the store to be used with future purchases of eligible items. BN-16424



That families use the added food purchasing power of Federal food stamp coupons to buy more and better food is confirmed by research on family buying patterns in both a rural and urban area. Of the substantial increases in food purchases and total value of food used by participating families after inauguration of pilot food stamp projects in 1961, animal products and fruits and vegetables accounted for more than 80% of the gains. Significantly, too, these are the kinds of food which return a greater share of the consumer's food dollar to the farmer. In one test area, farm returns on the foods purchased averaged \$1.75 per person per week before the Food Stamp Program started, compared with \$2.01 after it was established. N-39516



Information and education play an important role when food stamp coupons move into a new area. A C&MS representative talks with the editor of a grocer publication about a story on the program. Other information goes out in newspapers and over radio and television. N-55252



Local public welfare department workers are briefed on how the food stamp program works. State officials are responsible for establishing eligibility requirements for needy families who want to participate and must establish procedures for certifying families. N-55283



The manager of a super market instructs his employees on the program. There are few regulations for retailers accompanying the use of food stamps. Stores cooperate by listing foods which are in plentiful supply and therefore inexpensive, so food stamp shoppers can get the most for their money. In a survey of pilot communities, food coupons stimulated retail grocer sales by an average of 8%. Many grocers had to hire additional employees. N-48184



Security is important, since food stamp coupons are treated as money in food stores. This banker is bringing coupons from his vault for sale to recipients, who must show a card proving they are eligible to purchase the coupons and the amount they must pay for them. N-55293



Grocers are shown at a bank redeeming coupons spent at their stores. They receive cash for the face value of the coupons. The bank in turn redeems them through a Federal Reserve Bank. N-55186

STARTING IN A NEW AREA

It takes some time for residents of an area to obtain food coupons after the area has been named to enter the Food Stamp Program, because a number of essential steps must be taken. First, State officials must establish eligibility requirements for needy families who want to receive coupons, arrange for a staff to certify applicants, and decide where and how coupons will be issued to eligible families. Then, applicants must be interviewed to determine eligibility, and how much they must pay toward their food stamp coupons.

While this is going on, C&MS food stamp employees work with retail and wholesale food merchants, bankers, welfare agents, and others who will be involved in the program to explain their part in the operation.

Coupon issuance offices must be set up and lines of communication opened between the responsible State welfare and accounting officials and the Food Distribution Area offices of C&MS.

The community itself must be prepared for and work with the new food purchasing medium. Educational and informational support among all participating governmental bodies and the general public must be obtained.

The cooperation of home economists and others on the staffs of local consumer and nutrition education agencies is enlisted to tell recipients how to buy good food for balanced diets and how to use the coupons economically. Bank and retail food employees need to be informed on procedures for handling coupons.





Food stamp applicants go to welfare office to determine their eligibility. Poster shows maximum monthly income families of specified sizes may have to be eligible for the Food Stamp Program in Ohio. N-55206



Applicant family is visited by a welfare case worker. The home visit is a part of the certifying process for the Food Stamp Program, to verify facts reported by applicants. N-55292

A Home Demonstration Agent instructs food stamp recipients during their visit to buy food coupons. She tells them how to buy good food for balanced diets and how to use the coupons in the most economical way. N-51756



A housewife and mother of four children purchases food coupons for her family at her local issuing office. She paid \$18.50, the amount her family would normally spend for food, and received \$66 worth of coupons. Once a family becomes eligible, capable members of the family can pick up the coupon books with proper identification. N-51765



A recipient signs food stamp coupon books before leaving the office where she purchased them. When she purchases food, she will have to identify herself, limiting possibility of someone else using the coupons if they were lost. N-55239





The additional food dollars that flow into the economy of a food stamp area benefit small and large retailers who elect to participate, together with authorized "route" retailers such as dairies, bakeries, farm produce truckers. N-55613

A senior citizen makes a purchase using food coupons. She pays cash for items which are not on the food stamp purchasing list. Such items include identified imported foods, soap, and paper products. N-48174



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